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Thoreau and a Japanese Poet

Noboru Saito

When we consider Henry David Thoreau's influence on Japanese literature, we cannot overlook Hajime Nozawa, a Japanese poet, whose poems become interwoven with his manner of living.

Born on April 1, 1904 in Yamanashi, the poet published a collection of more than two hundred poems in 1934, and also irregularly issued several numbers of private booklets carrying his poems and essays since 1937. He ended his life in Yamanashi in 1945 at the end of forty-one. We cannot say, it is true, that his name is widely known to Japanese readers and his works are very popular among them at present. It is also difficult to compare Nozawa's hunble achievement in Japanese literature with the vast mark left by Thoreau on the realm of thought and literature in America through such noted essays as *Walden* and "Civil Disobedience" and many other essays, poems and comments. As it is said, however, that "Only one who knows can really appreciate it," not a few people who know Nozawa's pure and sincere way of living highly appreciate his unique poetical works born out of his simple and natural life.

Influenced by Thoreau's *Walden*, one of his favorite books[1] since his college days, Hajime Nozawa gave up the Political Science Course of Hosei University, Tokyo in Japan before graduation and came to live in a hut built the northern margin of Lake Shibire in Yamanashi near Tokyo. And here the poet lived alone by doing his own cooking and devoted himself to reading books and writing poems for six long years. It was in February, 1929 when Nozawa was twenty-five years old that he built the hut of Lake Shibire and started to live there.

In those days there was a strong aspiration among the men of letters in Yamanashi to win a name in the central world of literature. Many of them, therefore, left their home to seek after the ideal field for their literary activities in Tokyo. For example, in the case of some noted writers such as Shugoro Yamamoto[2], Shichiro Fukazawa[3] and others, it may be more adequate to say that they have cast away their home rather than merely left it.

On the other hand, when Nozawa came back home from Tokyo as mentioned above, he searched for the living environment suitable to be immersed in rest and tranquility and, with the intention to bring himself face to face with the real essence of life, he came to live by Lake Shibire. Thus going against the general trend of literary circles of the times, Nozawa had his own way as a man of letters native to Yamanashi, and he published his book, *The Koppadoji Shikyo*[4] at his own expense, in which he showed a delicate sensitivity and a keen insight into humanity in full measure.

Now, Nozawa sincerely admired Kotaro Takamura[5](1883-1956), who was a sculptor and poet at the same time. Partly because he was the oldest son of Koun Takamura, a noted artist of wood carving, Kotaro rather liked to call himself a sculptor, but he has not left so many products in this field. On the other hand, he displayed his distinctive ability in the world of literature, writing more than seven hundred poems, and publishing a lot of comments on art, translations, essays, etc. in his life. His literary activities were especially intensified after he came home from the tour of America, England, France and Italy extending from 1906 to 1909, when he studied art in these countries and added to his store of knowledge. As to his poetical works, Takamura's stature was so great that he was sometimes called "Father of Modern Poetry in Japan." Under these circumstances, it was quite natural that Nozawa should have desired to keep contact with Takamura, and though the communication may seem a little one-sided, it surely helped the young poet work up his ideas and enhance his spirit.

In fact, he had sent a great number of letters to Takamura since about 1939. In one of them, he wrote as follows:

> I have read the following passage in the writing of Thoreau, "Should not every apartment in which man dwells be lofty enough to create some obscurity overhead, where flickering shadows may play at evening about the rafters?"[6]
>
> Though I do not know whether the ceiling of your dwelling was obscure and lofty where ephemeral flickering shadows were playing or not, there must be huge fire shadows glittering about the ceiling if the mind of the dweller should be reflected in the scene. A man first begins to inhabit

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his house when he begins to live under the ceiling smoldering with burning firewood. A man also begins topossess the hearth in his house when the fire smokes to make the pothook and the bamboo or wood hand hanging it deep-black with the soot sticking to them like swellings. The tranquility of the winter night must sink into the mind far more deeply. And the light of the hearth must shine on the faces of the people by the fireside far redder and more brilliantly every winter. And when a man sees the appearance of someone's back warming himself at the fire a little away from him, only then the man first finds a human figure in his dwelling. Moreover, the experience that he saw something like a human figure there will remain forever in his mind deeply impressed as an indelible memory. No other element but fire can produce such a marvelous phenomenon, and it occurs only when fire burns before a man. This is one of the stories of the winter night which cannot be talked without fire.
(from "The Letters to Kotaro Takamura")

Takamura was sorely moved by this letter, and wondering that there is "A Visit of a Big Dragon"[7] in it, he commented on Nozawa as follows:

He talked about important persons of ancient and modern ages, Confucianism and Buddhism, geography and physiography, grasses and trees, the four seasons of spring, summer, autumn and winter, fire, and especially about water. He also talked about graveyards, food, women, old priests, stone, soil, the sky, dwellings, and at last about the Big Dragon. When he speaks of the nature surrounding Lake Shibire in Koshu, his words give out the sparkling and glittering fire of his soil. I was struck with the deep affection of this poet toward human beings. Though the language of Koppadoji is a little odd and partial, the peculiarity rather helps him talk about the deepness and greatness of the Orient. He makes light of the Occidental wisdom in praise of the complete boundlessness of the Orient. He scolds me for encouragement. After reading my poems, he asks me if I am satisfied with such works. He tells me it's no use to stop and crouch where I am now. He gets goose flesh, he says, to think of my present situation. I don't know how I can thank him enough. And I feel that this is nothing but "A Visit of a Big Dragon" to me.
(from "The Letters of Koppadoji")

Soon after Nozawa left Lake Shibire and came to live at Aoyanagi in the neighboring town of Masuho, he suffered from tuberculosis and died when he was forty-one years old. Though his death at so young an age is to be much regretted to think of a great hope set on him as the forerunner of the literary circles in Yamanashi, it should be admitted that the style of living he preserved throughout his life was rather bold and he, a worthy man, not without a kind of ideologic ambition in his life, maintained his high principle to the end of his days.

Thoreau and Nozawa are regarded as vanguards in the genre of "Nature-Writing", both taking up nature as their theme of literature. It is true that the shading of their works is somewhat different according to the difference in the literary background of each writer, but they must have absorbed the same kind of nourishment for their activities, similarly cutting themselves off the commonplace traditions of literature and leading, as it were, a life of a hermit.

For example, in the secluded life which Nozawa led far from the din and bustle of the world, there are some factors which may be associated with *The Hojoki*[8] by Kamo-no-Chomei. On the other hand, he made the modest statement as the poet that "when the human mind is immersed in the beauty and profundity of the whole creation, a man cannot help keenly feeling himself quite humble", and tried to pursue the essential qualities of life, coming in contact with the soul of Nature by plunging into Her bosom. It seems that the philosophy revealed in the following statement in *Walden*, rather than the view of life held by Kamo-no-Chomei, is more distinctly reflected in the pantheistic attitude of this poet.

I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practise resignation, unless it was quite necessary. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and Spartan-like as to put to rout all that was not life, to cut a broad swath and shave close, to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms, and, if it proved to be mean, why then to get the whole and genuine meanness of it, and publish its meanness to the world; or if it were sublime, to know it by experience, and be able to give a true account of it in my next excursion. For most men, it appears to me, are in a strange uncertainty about it, whether it is of the devil or of God, and have *somewhat hastily* concluded that it is the chief end of man here to "glorify God and enjoy him forever."[9]

After all, it may be concluded that Nozawa's experience during the life by Lake Shibire has expanded and enriched his "own identity" to uplift his soul as a poet.

The following passages are a part of Nozawa's poem "Spinach" in *The Koppadoji Shikyo*, in which he relates the natural environment of Lake Shibire and his simple way of living. He is having boiled spinach for supper of an autumnal evening.

In the hut by the mountain lake
Surrounded by hills and shadows,
A lonely evening meal I take.
The lake's a thousand meters high,
Five miles from town and one from village
With a mountain rising in the northern sky.

Besides mushrooms for my table in fall,
I relished bracken leaves in April
And coltsfoot stems in June above all.
Six years have passed by the fireside,
Thus sitting and drinking the lake water
To draw the wind toward my side.

I barely gather the autumnal recollections,
Blown by the piercing cold wind,
From civilization and out of meditations.
I lived a life, unreliable and severe,
Eating boiled spinach and sitting here
In the mountain hut by Lake Shibire.

In Chapter 12 "Brute Neighbors" of *Walden*, Thoreau wrote about the mice in his house which "would come out regularly at lunch time and pick up the crums" at his feet. On the other hand, Nozawa also talks tenderly, in his poem "Mice at Midnight," to the mice settled in his hut:

I joyfully welcome my fellow mice,
Running on the clay wall cheerfully.
Not sending them into night of ice,
I listen to their sound carefully.
In the darkness nothing to see,
I hear the only sound they make,
The sound, so consoling to me,
Living alone with no guest to take.

It's late autumn and snow's approaching,
The mice must feel chilly and lonely.
At midnight in the hut, I'm watching

My little neighbors, naughty but lovely.
Crunching the potato store in secret,
And making a dirt in rice chest daily,
While I sit reading in the garret,
The merry lodgers dance about me gaily.

Now, tireless noise-makers at midnight,
The snowy season is near at hand.
Prepare for the coming winter all right,
To prevent the cold wave over the strand.
Not depressed by the chilling tide,
Rake up straws for the warm rest,
I'll warm my hands by the fireside,
To pass the winter days in nest.

In view of the circumstances under which Nozawa developed his significant activities as a poet through the observation of the behavior of nature and a man like Thoreau, supporting the wide outskirt of the literary world in Yamanashi at the same time, it is expected that the excellent poetical works he left should be all the more properly estimated in Japan.

Notes:

[1] Besides Thoreau's works, Nozawa also liked Walt Whitman's poems.

[2] Shugoro Yamamoto's real name was Satomu Shimizu(1903-1967). He entered upon a literary career by *Sumadera Fukin* (The Neighborhood of the Suma Temple) in 1926, and continued to enjoy popularity after that with his unique style. His important works include *Mominoki wa Nokotta* (The Fir-tree Survived), *Koku Henreki* (A Tour in the Empty Space) and others. His short stories are also very popular with readers of every class.

[3] Shichiro Fukazawa tried to inquire into humanity, life and death, and other problems from a viewpoint of the common people supporting the local customs inherited in his native country, Yamanashi. His most important work is *Narayamabushi-Ko* (The Pathetic Story of Narayama) based upon the folklore of casting away of old women in the mountain.

[4] "Koppadoji" means "a foliage child". "Shikyo" comes from the Chinese classic "The Shi-king" (The Book of Songs), which is said to have been compiled by Confucius (551?-479BC). So the title of this poetical work may be translated as "The Book of Songs by Foliage Child".

The Koppadoji Shikyo, which can be called Walden of Nozawa, was published on April 10, 1934. He immediately sent a copy of the book Kotaro Takamura, and received the following letter from him:

Dear Mr. Nozawa,
I have received a copy of your book, The Koppadoji Shikyo with thanks. It reminded me of the manuscript you had sent me before. As my wife was in a critical condition at that time, I was obliged to give up everything for her nursing. Though she is still ill in bed, I have time to read books at present. I will read your book promptly.
(A letter dated April 25, 1934)

[5] It was in a series of essays titled "Bogetsu Bojitsu"(A Certain Day of a Certain Month) published in the journal on poetry, "The Rekitei"(A Milestone of History) of April 15, 1940 that Kotaro Takamura first mentioned Nozawa's letters. In the essay he wrote, "I have received letters amounting to as many as two hundred every day from a poet whom I have not met. His name is Hajime Nozawa, but he calls himself "Koppadoji".

[6] This passage is found in Chapter 13 "House-Warming" in Thoreau's *Walden*.

[7] Each of the eight lakes of Fuji has its own legend of the Dragon God. The guardian spirit of Lake Shibire is called the "Nozaki Dragon King". The expression of "A Visiting of the Big Dragon" seems to be used with such legendary background in mind.

[8] *The Hojoki* (1212) is an essay by Kamo-no-Chomei (1155-1216) in the earlier period of Kamakura Era. It relates the transience of human life and advocates the seclusion in the temple.

[9] Henry David Thoreau, *The Portable Thoreau*, (The Viking Press, 1975), pp.343-344.

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Editor's Note

Susie Carlisle

In July 2000, in the midst of the annual gathering of the Thoreau Society, Ron Bosco asked me if I would be interested in following in Michael Berger's esteemed footsteps as editor of *The Thoreau Society Bulletin*. I think I may have looked over my shoulder in an effort to seek out the person to whom Ron was attempting to engage in such an auspicious undertaking. No one was there; Ron was asking me. And here I am...

Although Michael graciously introduced me in his final editor's column in the Summer 2000 issue, I'd like to take this opportunity to offer additional insight into my many lives. I teach American Literature at Cushing Academy, a small boarding school in Ashburnham, Massachusetts (yes, Henry once passed through here on his way to Mt. Monadnock). I have three delightful teenagers who are the light of my life, and a husband who continues to support me with each additional undertaking. I spend a considerable amount of time in both Lincoln and Concord working with other teachers at the Thoreau Institute and as a member of the board of directors of the Thoreau Society. I am most committed to Thoreau's legacy as writer, naturalist, reformer, and involved member of the natural world; hence my willingness to take on the editorship of the *Bulletin*.

While I do not anticipate major changes in the format, I do plan to initiate a column that focuses on how Thoreau is thriving in the classroom, calling on former participants in the Thoreau's World and Ours teachers' institute for material. Jeff Cramer, curator of the Thoreau Institute, has graciously agreed to a regular "Curator's Column" as well, keeping the readers updated on new acquisitions and the manner in which such materials can be availed.

Finally, as I begin this journey down yet another path, I welcome the continued contributions from all those who have been so forthcoming with a wealth of information, ideas, and articles in the past. My heartfelt thanks to Michael for making the transition so smooth for me; I wish him the very best in his next adventure as I begin mine.

"A Sylvan Appearance": An Instance of Woodplay in *The Maine Words*

Randall Conrad

[Editor's Note: This article is excerpted from a study in progress. Randall Conrad directs the Thoreau Project at Calliope, Inc., Lexington, Mass. www.calliope.org/thoreau*]*

> Our woods are sylvan, and their inhabitants woodmen and rustics,—that is, selvaggia, and the inhabitants are salvages. A civilized man, using the word in the ordinary sense, with his ideas and associations, must at length pine there, like a cultivated plant, which clasps its fibres about a crude and undissolved mass of peat. – "Chesuncook"[1]

The three essay-chapters that make up Thoreau's second posthumous publication, *The Maine Woods*, are wondrously pun-profuse. As always, the puns and other wordplay that Thoreau installs in his verbal landscape become so many rabbit-holes for us to fall through. Or (to push the reference) every play on words is a looking-glass portal, reflecting novel and even contradictory dimensions.

The second chapter, "Chesuncook," first published in 1858 and originating in a trip taken in September 1853, is often considered the most sustained of the three. At once clear-sighted and evocative, "Chesuncook" explores a recurring contrast in *The Maine Woods*—that between "the wild" and the "partially cultivated country" (like Walden Woods). Culminating with a sensitive portrayal of a cruel and wasteful moose-hunt, "Chesuncook" is an extended expression of Thoreau's mature concern that wilderness, although it is a sacred place, is exposed to destruction by modern civilization.

In the concluding pages of "Chesuncook," Thoreau recapitulates the difference he sees between Maine's wilderness and "our smooth, but still varied landscape," to which he returns in Concord. But before we reach his concluding plea for forest conservation, we stumble into a small thicket of wordplay, namely the two sentences given above.

Thoreau has arranged this string of synonyms, cognates and translations rather like a little hall of mirrors, by whose light every conceit, and virtually each word, reflects multiple nuances of Thoreau's overall distinction between the wilderness and the tamed forest, and ultimately between the "savage" and the "civilized" man. [2]

Consider the key word, "sylvan"—what is it doing here? Literally speaking, all woods are sylvan, so Thoreau's assertion is merely redundant from the standpoint of denotation.

True, the word evokes John Evelyn's *Sylva, or a Discourse of Forest Trees and the Propagation of Timber* (1664, 1679), a major literary influence in "Chesuncook." (As Robert D. Richardson observes, "much of what we think of as Thoreau's conservation ethic either derives from or is closely paralled by Evelyn's seventeenth-century interest in the same problem."[3])

Clearly, though, Thoreau is invoking some *connotation* of "sylvan" that will characterize "our" familiar woods only, but not the wilderness. What then does "sylvan" summon up, beyond its literal meanings?

Something amusing, evidently. If we turn to this essay's first use of "sylvan" one page earlier, Thoreau evokes a comical image, imagining the earth stripped of all forest, even the very shrubs (so that "we shall be reduced to gnaw the very crust of the earth for nutriment"): "At this rate, we shall all be obliged to let our beards grow at least, if only to hide the nakedness of the land and make a sylvan appearance" (p. 154).

This ironic conceit, in turn, reflects an earlier image of the denuded earth (p. 151). The wilderness, as Thoreau states there, had a "wild, damp, and shaggy look" before men cultivated it almost out of existence. Visualized in this context, Thoreau's sylvan men with their full-grown beards will mimic (and parody) the wild, damp, and shaggy look of wilderness past. Insofar as Thoreau's bearded men are prone while gnawing the earth's crust, they even resemble the vanished numbers of "fallen and decaying trees" wearing a "thick coat of moss," which Thoreau says formerly lay upon the forest floor, part of the cycle of succession.[4]

Returning to connotations of "sylvan" in the passage we are considering, there is plentiful evidence that this adjective, first recorded in Elizabethan literature, was suffering from an advanced case of overfamiliarity in Thoreau's time. When Thoreau uses "sylvan" in *The Maine Woods*, I believe he is helping this worn-out word advance to its terminal stage, self-parody.

Following the heyday of English pastoral poetry, "sylvan" had become a convenient cliché for poets and writers, the instant evocation of a Forest of Arden peopled by shepherds, nymphs, sprites, and "Sylvanus" himself, a Roman forest god (and by extension, any forest-dwelling fellow).

In Thoreau's time, both "Sylvanus" and "sylvan" were enjoying a revival thanks partly to certain romanticizing Transcendentalists. Think of Bronson Alcott's design for the summerhouse he and Thoreau built for Emerson in 1847: "Alcott fancied a 'sylvan' style, curving the rafters in a 'mystic serpentine,' much to the distaste of both Thoreau and the town."[5]

More annoying still, the "sylvan" sobriquet had begun to appear in certain advertisements for new lectures by the author of a work in progress about Life in the Woods. Again the chief perpetrator was Alcott, who was forever calling Thoreau a modern Sylvanus.[6] When Alcott arranged and advertised a Thoreau lecture on March 22, 1852,[7] it was plainly he and not the lecturer who titled it "Sylvan Life." And didn't Thoreau exclaim to his journal, three weeks after his lecture: "Alcott wished me to name my book *Sylvania*!"

In this same journal entry, in fact, Thoreau nicely illustrates his objection to the sort of pastoral pretension that indulges in words like "sylvan" when he comments on the transience of epithetical writing:

> Channing calls our walks along the river [...] *riparial* excursions. It is a pleasing epithet, but I mistrust such, even as good as this, in which the mere name is so agreeable, as if it would ring hollow ere long; and rather the thing should make the true name poetic at last. Alcott wished me to name my book *Sylvania*! But he and C. are two men in these respects. We make a good many prairial excursions.[8]

(Needless to state, time has confirmed Thoreau. *Walden*, a "true name," has taken on a deep poetic resonance in modern English. Would we be as tempted to read a *Sylvania*?)

In "Chesuncook" then, Thoreau's use of "sylvan" is almost certainly sardonic. Our tamed woods we call by this worn-out pastoral adjective that grates on Thoreau's ears—this affectation of those who would rather romanticize the woods than repair to them for spiritual renewal.

To continue our exegesis. Who dwells in our woods? "Woodmen and rustics," says Thoreau—the latter denoting country folk while also connoting "crude, coarse, or simple" people. As to the word "woodman," it has evolved over the centuries from the supernatural to the civilized, appropriately to

its use here. To the Elizabethans, it could still have meant "a wild man of the woods, a faun or satyr" as well as a hunter, forester, or forest-dweller. By Thoreau's time, the "wild" meaning was obsolete and "woodman" most commonly denoted that harbinger of material civilization, the woodcutter.[9]

Now Thoreau launches a parallel clause ("—that is, [our woods are] *selvaggia*, and the inhabitants are salvages...") that translates his proposition into other sylvan-derived words. Quite out of the blue, he introduces (as a synonym for "sylvan") the Italian adjective *selvaggia*, "wild" (from selva, wood; the French cognate is sauvage).[10]

Why this unexpected excursion into the Romance languages? For one thing, it introduces (if you read Italian, at least) a lexicon in which Latin word-roots are more clearly discernible—a revealing language which has not lost all its "wild" character.[11] Specifically, it enables Thoreau to put aside his tongue-in-cheek treatment of "sylvan" long enough to recapture the word's original idea—"wild"—before reversing it with the very next pun.

"And the inhabitants are salvages." This is a cardinal pun. Thoreau intends his antique spelling to bring us closer to the word's root meaning, of course—yet he knows that "salvages" (especially when seen in print, not pronounced) is bound to draw us away from the forest and out to sea. The inhabitants are not exactly *savages*, woods-people, any more. Nowadays they are mere *items of salvage*.

If such are the inhabitants of *our* woods (as distinct from wilderness-men), they must be the very opposite of savages. They might just be the "civilized men" of Thoreau's following sentence, rescued from the shipwreck that is civilization, and redeemable (if at all) by a sojourn in the forest.[12]

We proceed to Thoreau's second sentence, more obviously pun-driven than the first: "A civilized man, using the word in the ordinary sense, with his ideas and associations, must at length pine there, like a cultivated plant, which clasps its fibres about a crude and undissolved mass of peat."

Some "ordinary senses" of "civilized" include: "socially developed," "humane, ethical, and reasonable," and "refined in taste, cultured" – foundations for the upcoming simile, "like a *cultivated* plant." Civilized man is no longer a *pine*, a mighty evergreen in the fullness of life[13], but is doomed to *pine* (waste away in mourning) in our tamed woods, deprived of nature's rich soil and drawing less and less sustenance from a poor clump of peat.[14]

As transcendentalists nevertheless, we must infer that man need *not* pine, but shall rather *be* pine (be restored to life and immortality; become the "woodman" in the obsolete—archetypal—sense, the supernatural wild man) if we can only discover an extraordinary sense of the word "civilized"—divorced from the worn-out "ideas and associations" to which we cling—our familiar peat.

Who shall give to "civilized" this renewed, extraordinary sense? It must be an individual out of the ordinary, someone who is neither cultivated plant nor yet pine, having roots that can divine "some new and more bracing fountain of the Muses, far in the recesses of the wilderness" (p. 146).

In short, it must be the Poet in the sacred role (and obsolete sense) of Woodman.[15] The true poet's hardiness belies his aspect as a "fragile" flower "like the orchises, commonly described as too delicate for cultivation, which derive their nutriment from the crudest mass of peat" (p. 156). *Our* poets are not derivative versifiers who fancy themselves Sylvani, but truly "spirits of a yet more liberal culture" than that of the cultivated potted-plant-man. To these spirits, "no simplicity is barren" – not the simplicity of mere peat, for example, and not the simplicity of Life in the Woods.

We have considered an intricate poetic construct. All told, it serves chiefly to concentrate—to reiterate in words dense with rich images—the message already expressed at the climax of the moose-hunt many pages earlier:

> Is it the lumberman, then, who is the friend and lover of the pine, stands nearest to it, and understands its nature best? Is it the tanner who has barked it, or he who has boxed it for turpentine, whom posterity will fable to have been changed into a pine at last? No! no! it is the poet; he it is who makes the truest use of the pine, ...who loves them as his own shadow in the air, and lets them stand. ...It is the living spirit of the tree, not its spirit of turpentine, with which I sympathize, and which heals my cuts. It is as immortal as I am, and perchance will go to as high a heaven, there to tower above me still. (pp. 121-22.)

Precisely, the poet's calling and special skill consist in engineering unexpected corridors of verbal mirrors, such as these which have enlightened us, deep in the recesses of Thoreau's wilderness. When viewed (or heard) from the right standpoint, Thoreau's mirrors will place a given expression *beside itself*, releasing it to echo across the forests and return to our ear reversed, distorted, perhaps transcending antonymities in some new synthesis. If you read Thoreau's two sentences aloud you may hear, scrambled within "sylvan," an echo of that Thoreauvian watchword, "civil."[16]

Notes

[1] Thoreau, *The Maine Woods*, ed. Joseph J. Moldenhauer, Princeton NJ: Princeton U P, 1972, 155.

[2] "Savage," a word Thoreau employs variously in the other chapters of *The Maine Woods*, appears in "Chesuncook" only in the passage under consideration here. It requires levels of explication beyond the scope of the present exercise, raising as it does the important issue of Anglo-American savagism. The pioneering studies of Thoreau and Indians by Robert Sayre and Philip Gura in 1977 have launched a continuing dialogue, to which recent participants have contributed views from multicultural and Native standpoints. See, notably: Tom Lynch, "The 'Domestic Air' of Wilderness: Henry Thoreau and Joe Polis in the Maine Woods," *Weber Studies*, 14:3, Fall 1997.

[3] Robert D. Richardson, *Thoreau: A Life of the Mind*, Berkeley: U Cal P, 1987, 304.

[4] The pivotal pun that enables Thoreau's jest involves "crust" (of bread), implicit in the earth's "crust"—either its topsoil or, geologically speaking, the entire solid outer layer of the planet. See note 12.

[5] Walter Harding and Milton Meltzer, *A Thoreau Profile*, NY: Crowell, 1962, 55. Also see W. Barksdale Maynard, "Thoreau's House at Walden," *Art Bulletin*, 81:2, June 1999, esp. 312-20.

[6] "A sylvan man accomplished in the virtues of an aboriginal civility, and quite superior to the urbanities of cities, Thoreau is himself a wood, and its inhabitants. [...] and were an Indian to flower forth, and reveal the secrets hidden in the wilds of his cranium, it would not be more surprising than the speech of this Sylvanus." January 22, 1851. (*Journals of Bronson Alcott*, Odell Shepard, ed., Boston: Little, Brown, 1938, 238). Years after Thoreau's death, Alcott would write that his friend "united these qualities of sylvan and human." (*Concord Days*, Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1872, 11).

[7] Walter Harding, *The Days of Henry Thoreau*, Dover, 1982, 287.

[8] Thoreau, *Journal*, April 15, 1852. (III, 418. Special thanks to Tom Blanding for locating this entry.)

[9] The definitions I offer for "rustics," "woodman," and "civilized" are culled from the *Oxford English Dictionary*, 7th ed. (1982). In contrast to the woods/wilderness distinction in "Chesuncook," the younger Thoreau who visited Katahdin seems to have sometimes conceived the wilderness itself as sylvan—a more conventional ver-

sion of pastoral, perhaps. Certainly Thoreau populates the Maine woods of "Ktaadn" with woodmen, rustics, and sylvani—nor are they Indians or "salvages." In a manuscript of 1846, Thoreau describes his woodsman guide, Tom Fowler, as "a young and ingenuous waterman with that indolent but mild and mellow expression of those who had had much intercourse with rude nature—the noble frankness of a forest child." [*Journal, Walden*, April 17, 1846, Berg Collection, NYPL, quoted in Leonard Neufeldt, "The Making of Alek Therien," *Concord Saunterer*, XII (1977) #2, 14.] Insofar as an unspoken sexual attraction motivates these pastoral tropes [Walter Harding, "Thoreau's Sexuality," *Journal of Homosexuality*, 21 #3 (1991), 32], the "forest children" along Thoreau's path are more than guides—some are conductors of a powerful current. They channel the lifelong sublimation [Harding, 30] by which Thoreau transforms eros into his overarching love of Nature.

[10] Thoreau gives *selvaggio* a feminine-singular ending, no doubt modifying the unstated subject "woods" (selva). Robert F. Sayre seems to misinterpret this Italian adjective as if it were a plural noun (*Thoreau and the American Indians*, Princeton: Princeton U P, 1977, 8), but it does not skew Sayre's interpretation of this passage.

[11] Cf. Journal, Feb. 23, 1853 (IV, 494): "I think myself in a wilder country, and a little nearer to primitive times, when I read in old books which spell the word savages with an *l* (salvages) like John Smith's 'General Historie of Virginia, etc.,' reminding me of the derivation of the word from *sylva*. There is some of the wild wood and its bristling branches still left in their language. The savages they describe are really *salvages*, men of the *woods*."

Ichiro Iida cites this passage in pondering Thoreau's etymologically driven conceptualization of "savage" ("Thoreau and the Indian: Savagism and Wilderness vs. Civilization," *Studies in Henry David Thoreau*, Kobe: Thoreau Society of Japan, 1999, 81-82.)

[12] As the above journal entry (note 8) suggests, the *l* in 17th-century "salvages," meaning savages, was usually silent. In print, this etymological vestige blurs the difference between this "salvages" and its homograph, "salvages" meaning rescued properties.

In a contemporary variant, the l is pronounced (and the stress laid on the final syllable) in "The Dry Salvages," the Massachusetts place-name that T. S. Eliot chose for the title of his Third Quartet (Eliot, *Complete Poems and Plays*, NY: Harcourt, Brace, 1952, 130).

Eliot presumed that this cluster of rocks off Cape Ann got its name as *les trois sauvages*, so that these Salvages are savages—creatures of the wild. The unique pronunciation ("to rhyme with assuages") differentiates this French-derived "salvages" from its homograph.

Thoreau, of course, passed by Cape Ann on his steamboat trips to Maine (cf. p. 85). Anticipating Eliot in the field, Thoreau on his third visit queried a Cape Ann carpenter about Salvages as a place name: "he and all the inhabitants of the Cape always called it 'Selvaygias.'" The distinctive regional pronunciation is substantially that which Eliot later found; however, Thoreau's carpenter supposed "Salvages" referred to shipwrecks (rather than savages). (Journal, June 19, 1857. IX, 445).

[13] And bearing seeds of everlasting life: "It is as immortal as I am, and perchance will go to as high a heaven, there to tower above me still" (p. 122).

[14] Thoreau's image mirrors his earlier picture of humanity "reduced to gnaw the very crust of the earth for nutriment." Now the very crust has vanished, so that we must eat peat. (The soil in peat bogs is highly acidic and low in nutrients.)

[15] A forest-dweller but not a woodcutter, the poet-woodman knows the right use of wood. Does he not bear a resemblance to our poet of Life in the Woods, whose advice to writers concludes with, "Learn to split wood, at least." (*A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*, Princeton NJ: Princeton U P, 1980, 105.)

[16] Thoreau's Orphic companion heard the same echo when he pronounced Thoreau "a sylvan man accomplished in the virtues of an aboriginal *civility*" (my emphases; cf. note 6).

Book Notes: Carson's *Lost Woods*

Antonio Casado da Rocha

Carson, Rachel. *Lost Woods: The Discovered Writing of Rachel Carson.* Editedand with an introduction by Linda Lear. Boston: Beacon Press, 1998.

In a recent public lecture co-organized by the Thoreau Institute, biographer Linda Lear remarked that Rachel Carson kept a copy of *Walden* at her bedside table. Indeed, Carson mentions Thoreau as one of the "great masters," who "most truly represented the contemplative observer of the world about us" (94). However, Rachel Carson's career as a scientist, nature writer and environmentalist makes her sound convincing in her own right when she writes: "Yet if we are true to the spirit of John Burroughs, or of [Richard] Jefferies or [W. H.] Hudson or Thoreau, we are not imitators of them but—as they themselves were—we are pioneers in new areas of thought and knowledge. If we are true to them, we are the creators of a new type of literature as representative of our own day as was their own" (94).

The Thoreau enthusiast will find plenty of affinity in Carson's writing, even from early pieces about "the call of the trail" (13) and "the decline of wildlife" (15). A lover of the Cape Cod and Maine shores, she recorded a morning when "all that was worth saying was being said by the sea," and added: "It is only in wild and solitary places that it speaks so clearly. Another such place I like to remember is that wilderness of beach and high dunes where Cape Cod, after its thirty-mile thrust into the Atlantic, bends back toward the mainland" (118).

Broadly defining the scope of biology as "the history of the earth and all its life—the past, the present, and the future," Carson believes our first acquaintance with this science should come through nature itself (165). As an example, she mentions "the writing of the great naturalists such as Hudson and Thoreau," which are "rooted in man's emotional reaction to that life stream of which he is a part" (166). Rachel Carson deeply believed that "natural beauty has a necessary place in the spiritual development of any individual or any society." Accordingly, she wrote, "whenever we destroy beauty, or whenever we substitute something man-made and artificial for a natural feature of the earth, we have retarded some part of man's spiritual growth" (160). The ethical and political implications of this view, no matter how difficult to implement, are for us to draw.

Anticipating efforts such as the Walden Woods Project, Carson expressed in a private letter her wish that an area she used to call the "Lost Woods" could be kept always just as it was. "If ever I wish for money," she wrote, "it is when I see something like that . . . we could create a sanctuary there, where people like us could go . . . 'and walk about, and get what they need.' Well, if no one thinks of it, it certainly won't happen; if someone does think hard enough, it just might" (172-3).

President's Column

Ronald A. Bosco

[Editor's Note: The following remarks are excerpted from Society President Ronald A. Bosco's inaugural address at the July Annual Gathering.]

I am very grateful to the Thoreau Society Board of Directors and, most especially, to the membership of the Society for the confidence shown toward me in nominating for and electing me to the office of the President. I promise you now that I shall devote my entire attention to carrying through on the objectives I set forth in my "vision statement":

1. to continue to extend governance opportunities to the membership-at-large through structures such as the Committee on Nominations and Elections;

2. to implement the now-approved "advocacy" component of the Society's mission, particularly advocacy on behalf of Thoreau's ideals of social and political justice and on behalf of the preservation of "Thoreau country"; and

3. to complete my term with the means in place to insure the long-term financial self-sufficiency of the Society, and, as one sign of that self-sufficiency, to make every reasonable effort restore the Society's presence in the town of Concord proper.

I am certainly aware that I assume the presidency at a significant transitional moment in the Society's history, a history now sixty years in the making. Transitions are by definition disruptive, but if I have learned anything about transitions in theory and transitions in practice from my study of the seasonal structure of Henry's journals and life, transitions are, as he has taught me, also generative.

I consider the Society's recent past to be generative. Under Joel Myerson's leadership from 1992 to 1996, hard decisions were made about the Society's future and about the preservation and promotion of its mission; the means were established to expand its visibility and membership, and a productive collaborative relationship was established with the Walden Woods Project to create the Thoreau Institute, which now insures the safety and accessibility of the Society's Collections. Under Elizabeth Witherell's leadership from 1996 to this year, enormous efforts were made to consolidate the Society's resources and strengths, and great strides were made in creating a Board of Directors and governance structures that were not only responsive to the needs of the Society in transition, but also respectful of the diverse contributions and interests of the membership. . . .

First with Joel, then with Beth, and now finally with me, the mantle of leadership has literally passed from one generation to another. Like them, I owe a considerable intellectual and personal debt to the members of that generation which founded the Thoreau Society many years ago and which, by their example, taught and nurtured me in the multiple ways of "honoring Henry David Thoreau and his legacy." . . .

Consistent with the exemplary instruction of the Society's founders, I do not believe that the transitions of the Society's recent past are over, nor do I believe that it is desirable that they should be over. In recent days I have undertaken the following initiatives which, I trust, will position the Society to capitalize on the generative capacity of this particular transitional moment:

1. In light of the overwhelming support for the modification of the Society's mission as it is stated in the "Purpose" clause of the By-Laws, I have established an Advocacy Advisory Committee. My charge to this committee is to define "advocacy" and to provide the Board with a succinct statement of policy and procedures for achieving this newly-added objective of the Society. I invite all members of the Society who have views on the most appropriate ways for the Society to realize the "advocacy" component of its mission to contact me, the committee chair—Joel Myerson, or any of the members of this committee—Susie Carlisle, Jayne Gordon, Ronald Wesley Hoag, and John Mack—directly. A report is due from the Advocacy Advisory Committee by December 15, and it will be discussed by the Board at its January meeting.

2. On the subject of the By-Laws: As you know, I chaired the ad hoc By-Laws Committee. That committee proposed the two amendments on which the members voted during the Spring balloting. The amendment to incorporate "advocacy" into the Society's mission passed with 82% of those voting, voting in favor of the amendment; a second amendment, which proposed a mechanism for amending the By-Laws achieved only 52% of the required 66 2/3% needed to pass. Because I believe that our members deserve a means of open communication with the Board on the By-Laws, I am extending the term of this ad hoc committee. I am pleased to announce that Board member Shirley Van Clay will chair the ad hoc By-Laws Committee; she will be joined on the committee by Board member Robert Galvin and Ann Wanzer, representing the membership-at-large.

3. In a few minutes, you will hear the Society's Finance Committee Chair Robert Galvin announce that the Society has just received a very substantial bequest from one of its late members. This has prompted me to constitute an ad hoc Long-range Planning Committee to prepare a statement on the subject for discussion at the January meeting of the Board. I consider the work of this committee to be crucial to the future financial self-sufficiency of the Society and to the preservation and promotion of the Society's mission. I have asked Robert Galvin, John Mack, and Tom Harris to sit on the committee; I shall chair the committee.

4. As we are all aware, 2004 marks the one-hundred- fiftieth anniversary of the publication of Walden. I have established a Steering Committee to represent the Society's interests in the organizing what we all know will be a host of local, national, and international events celebrating "Walden in 2004."

The reports of the Walden in 2004 Steering Committee, as well as that of the Long-range Planning Committee, will be before you at this time next year. Beginning with the Fall 2000 issue of the *Thoreau Society Bulletin*, we will publish annually the membership rosters of all ad hoc and regular committees of the Society, and we will indicate the means by which members can communicate with these committees. . . . This initiative will insure even greater openness within the Society, and insure too that governance is attentive to the wishes of the membership-at-large. . . .

As you may gather from these few remarks, I have "landed running." I have, with the Board's approval, made several other decisions in recent days which I should

like to announce to you now.

Because I believe in "working" Boards of Directors, I have staffed and, in some instances, expanded committees and renewed their charges. I intended to propose the expansion of the Board by one elected seat next year, but in consideration of the amount of work needed to be done now, I am pleased to report that Laura Dassow Walls has accepted a one-year appointed seat on the Board. The seat she will occupy will be open for election in the Spring of 2001.

I have also reinstituted the life member category of membership in the Society. Between now and December 31, 2000, the cost of life membership will be $750; effective January 1, 2001, the cost will be $1,000. I have directed that all proceeds realized through life memberships will be committed to the Society's "endowment."

Finally, I am pleased to announce that Board member Susie Carlisle has accepted the position of Editor of the *Thoreau Society Bulletin*, effective with the Fall 2000 issue, and I join all in expressing my appreciation to Michael Berger for his service as Editor of the Bulletin for the past two years. I am especially grateful to Susie for accepting this challenging position. An experienced and successful high school teacher, who is also currently the Master Teacher in the Thoreau Institute's summer workshop for teachers, by her service as Editor Susie will enable the Society to reach out to a whole new generation and constituency of membership. . . .

In closing, I again express my gratitude to all of you for your support and good wishes as I assume the presidency of the Society. There are many challenges and opportunities before us, but I firmly believe that together we can answer those challenges and realize those opportunities to the advantage and reputation of the Society. Over the next two years, you will hear me use the word transition often; I do so in the confident and open spirit of Thoreau, who remarked in his Journal on March 21, 1853, "the future is worth expecting." We are a remarkable Society, and our "future is worth expecting." We are remarkable for the strength of vision and purpose of the person whose legacy we honor, and we are remarkable, too, for the great diversity of insight and talent our members bring to the multiple dimensions of our mission. A considerable part of my own expectation for the future is that I truly hope those friends and former members of the Society who have felt disenfranchised by the transitions of our recent years will give us a fresh look. The doors to this Society are open, and I promise all that under my leadership they will remain so.

Curator's Column — *Jeffrey S. Cramer*

With what will now be a regular feature of *The Thoreau Society Bulletin*, I will be keeping members informed about items of interest regarding the Society's collections.

Recent donations

The Writings of Henry D. Thoreau, also known as the Thoreau Edition or the Princeton Edition, has given their archives to the Thoreau Society. As each volume in this series is published, material collected during its publication will be placed in their archives. A brief finding aid to material already available may be found by following the link at: *www.walden.org/collections/overview.asp*

Bradley P. Dean, editor of *Wild Fruits* and *Faith in the Seed*, and Media Center Director at the Thoreau Institute, has begun to donate his collection to the Thoreau Society. This collection is particularly strong in editions of books that Thoreau is known to have read. This growing collection, being donated item-by-item over a period of time, has already supplied many titles not found in our other research collections.

Robert D. Richardson, author of *Henry Thoreau: A Life of the Mind* and *Emerson: the Mind on Fire*, has generously donated eight boxes of material collected during his research on those volumes. Comprised primarily of original 19th century periodicals, this donation added many unique items to the Society's growing collections.

I would urge other members to follow both Brad Dean and Bob Richardson's lead in donating materials to the Society.

Searching the collections

The first is to go to the Henley Library Catalog, at: http://ti-library.walden.org/. Here you will find access to the Society's over six thousand monographs, the cataloging of which will be completed before the end of this year. And now you can begin to search the Society's many non-book collections—including manuscripts, realia, articles, clippings, unpublished lectures, etc.—by using the Finding Aid Search Form at: *www.walden.org/collections/dbsearch.asp*

The creation of finding aids for the Thoreau Society's fifty-thousand-plus non-book items is an-going process which will take many years to complete, but when finished it will provide detailed access to the research collections of both Walter Harding and Raymond Adams, as well as other Society holdings. New items are being added regularly, so please check back often.

The Curator is available from 8:00 to 4:00 Monday through Friday and can be reached at: Jeffrey S. Cramer, Curator of Collections, Thoreau Institute, 44 Baker Farm, Lincoln, MA 01773-3004. Fax: (781) 259-4710. Phone: (781) 259-4730. E-mail: *Jeff.Cramer@walden.org*

Build Thoreau's Cabin—a beginning course in carpentry

Gary Nelson, North House Folk School, Tuition $200, Grand Marais, Minnesota

Tools Needed: Students should each have a framing hammer (16 or 20 oz.), a 25 ft. tape measure, a speed square, a framing square, and a tool belt. This course is designed for the person with little or no building experience. Anyone who is intimidated by the thought of building their own cabin will learn that the techniques involved in the construction of a small frame building are not so mystifying. Neither are they only for the skilled carpenter. Nearly anyone can come away from this course with the skills needed for building virtually any small structure. Students will learn the use of basic hand and power tools, and develop a knowledge of the materials and techniques used in frame or "stick" construction. As a learning method, the class will construct a 10' x 14' cabin of locally-milled, rough-cut lumber. The cabin design is based on Henry David Thoreau's 'Walden' cabin with an added sleeping loft. The course will cover foundation options, floor and wall framing, roof framing, roofing, siding, and installing doors and windows. You will also learn some of the secrets to working with rough lumber.

A series of follow-up courses—Building Thoreau's Cabin—the finishing touches (not quite as Thoreau did it)—is also offered periodically.

General Information: (218) 387-9762 Registration: (888) 387-9762
www.northhouse.org/classes/shelter
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Thoreau Society Committee Memberships

Ronald A. Bosco

As I indicated to our members convened at the Business Meeting during the Annual Gathering in July, henceforth the membership rosters of all regular and ad hoc committees of the Thoreau Society would be published annually in the autumn issue of the Thoreau Society Bulletin.

The committee rosters that follow are complete and up-to-date with the publication of this issue of the Thoreau Society Bulletin. The list of committees and their members that follows is divided into two parts: Ad Hoc Committees and Regular Committees. The responsibilites of all Regular Committees are set forth in the By-Laws of the Thoreau Society. The By-Laws also provide the President with the power to appoint on occasion other committees—what I refer to here as ad hoc committees—with the concurrence of the Board of Directors.

Because of the press of business before the Board, both as the result of our membership having approved the inclusion of "advocating for the preservation of Thoreau country" in the Society's Statement of Purpose and as the result of several initiatives that I have undertaken in consultation with the Board in an effort to guarantee the future growth, self-sufficiency, and sense of community of the Society, I have established the following ad hoc committees:

1. Advocacy Advisory Committee:
I have charged this Committee to define advocacy and to recommend to the Board a policy and procedures for achieving this newly-added component of the Society's mission. The Committee's report will be discussed at the January Board meeting.

2. Awards Advisory Committee:
I have charged this Committee to advise the Board as expeditiously as possible on a policy and procedures with respect to (a) the Society's reinstituting the Thoreau Society Distinguished Achievement Award and the Thoreau Society Distinguished Service Award and making these awards on a regular basis, and with respect to (b) the awarding of the Thoreau Society Medal.

3. By-Laws Committee:
This Committee's charge, which is extended from January 1999, when President Witherell first constituted the Committee, is to oversee the By-Laws and report to and advise the Board on any correspondence from the membership regarding the By-Laws.

4. Shop, Leases, Contracts, and Development Committee:
This Committee's charge is extended and amplified from the one given to it in January 2000, when President Witherell first constituted the Committee. The charge to this Committee, then, is to oversee, on behalf of the Society, all negotiations concerning leases and contracts relating to the Thoreau Society Shop at Walden Pond, and, further, to provide the Board with a succinct statement on long-range planning for the Society.

Because I believe the Society's financial stability and self-sufficiency are crucial to our long-range planning process, I have temporarily incorporated various aspects of the charges from the By-Laws relating to both the Development Committee and the Finance Committee into this ad hoc Committee's charge. I have assigned the charge and the entire membership of the Development Committee to this ad hoc Committee; J. Wheeler, who has served as the "Concord sub-committee" of the Development Committee, will work with the ad hoc Shop, Leases, Contracts, and Development Committee on issues relevant to the town of Concord. I have retained the Finance Committee as an independent regular committee of the Society and named R. Galvin its Chair.

The Committee's report will be discussed at the January Board meeting.

5. Walden in 2004:
A Sesquicentennial Celebration—Steering Committee: I have charged this Committee to advise the Board on appropriate activities regarding this celebration, and to represent, with the concurrence of the Board, the Society's interests in the organizing of local, national, and international events marking the 150th year since the publication of Walden. I have further charged the Committee to provide the Board with a descriptive statement of proposed activities relating to this celebration; this statement will be discussed at the January Board meeting.

At its July meeting, and in accordance with the By-Laws, the Board named Board members R. Hudspeth and J. Mack to the Committee on Nominations and Elections, and I named R. Hudspeth as Chair of the Committee; S. Delano, D. Schwie, and C. Wilkins were previously elected to this Committee by the membership at large. Additionally, I have charged the Research Committee, a regular committee of the Society, to provide the Board with a statement on how best to achieve the Society's educational and research missions to the mutual advantage of both; this statement will be discussed at the January Board meeting.

I have provided email addresses for the chairs of all committees. Because the vitality of the Society depends entirely on the continued support and insight of our membership, I respectfully ask all members who have a view relevant to the work of any of these committees—both the Ad Hoc Committees as defined above and the Regular Committees as defined in the By-Laws—to please register that view directly with the committee chair(s).

Ad Hoc Committees

Advocacy Advisory Committee:
S. Carlisle, J. Gordon, R. W. Hoag, J. Mack, J. Myerson (Chair: myerson-joel@sc.edu)

Awards Advisory Committee:
S. Carlisle, R. W. Hoag, R. Hudspeth, S. Van Clay, E. Witherell (Chair: c60ekw1@corn.cso.niu.edu)

By-Laws Committee:
R. Galvin, S. Van Clay (Chair: SAVanClay@aol.com), A. Wanzer

Shop, Leases, Contracts, and Development Committee:
R. Bosco (Chair: bosco@cas.albany.edu), R. Galvin, T. Harris (Staff Support), J. Mack, J. Wheeler (Concord sub-committee of the Development Committee)

Walden in 2004: A Sesquicentennial Celbration—Steering Committee:
R. Bosco and J. Myerson (Co-chairs: bosco@cas.albany.edu; myerson-joel@sc.edu), J. Gordon, T. Harris (Staff Support), J. Mitchell, W. Mott, R. Schneider (Editor, The Concord Saunterer)

Continued on next page

Regular Committees

Annual Gathering:
D. Ganoe (Chair), P. Brace, L. Mack

Collections Committee:
K. Basile, J. Myerson (Chair: myerson-joel@sc.edu), A. Wanzer

Committee on Nominations and Elections:
S. Delano, R. Hudspeth (Chair: hudspeth@uor.edu), J. Mack, D. Schwie, C. Wilkins

Executive Committee:
R. Galvin (Chair: robtgalvin@mindspring.com), R. Hudspeth, T. Potter, S. Van Clay, B. Witherell

Finance Committee:
R. Galvin (Chair: robtgalvin@mindspring.com)

Publications Committee:
S. Carlisle (Editor, *Thoreau Society Bulletin*), T. Harris (Staff Support), R. Hoag, K. Merrill, W. Mott (Chair: wmott@wpi.edu), R. Schneider (Editor, *The Concord Saunterer*)

Research Committee:
J. Gordon (Chair: ergordon@aol.com), L. Walls, L. P. Wilson

Standing Committee:
R. Bosco, President; J. Myerson (Chair of the Committee: myerson-joel@sc.edu); B. Powell (Advisor to the Committee); E. Witherell, Past-President

An Echo of Donne at the End of *Walden*

Steven Doloff

While annotators of Walden have commented on various aspects of the book's last paragraph,[1]

> I do not say that John or Jonathan will realize all this; but such is the character of that morrow which mere lapse of time can never make to dawn. The light which puts out our eyes is darkness to us. Only that day dawns to which we are awake. There is more day to dawn. The sun is but a morning star (II 367).[2]

they may have missed in it an echo of John Donne, characteristically adapted to Thoreau's sanguine perspective.

In Donne's celebrated "Devotion #17" ("Perchance hee for whom this bell tolls, . . .") in his *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions* (1624), the author, in one of several well-known epigrammatic sentences, states, "The bell doth toll for him that thinkes it doth" (441). Herein, I believe, might be found both a moral and rhetorical antecedent to Thoreau's assertion "Only that day dawns to which we are awake."

Thoreau's literary use of Donne elsewhere is evident,[3] with various quotations from Donne appearing (both with and without attribution) in *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* (I 137, 283, 315, 356, 406) and (without attribution) in the "Higher Laws" chapter of Walden itself (II 243). Indeed, Thoreau's own ability to compress wonderful conceits and great philosophical meanings into strikingly plain sentences, it has been argued, owes much to his study of the rhetorical ingenuity of Donne and other 17th Century English religious writers.[4]

Such stylistic influence might well be detected in the simple profundity of Thoreau's "Only that day dawns to which we are awake." The more particular echo here of Donne's statement "The bell doth toll for him that thinkes it doth," however, I find in Thoreau's similar refashioning of a commonplace moralism. Thoreau, like Donne, transforms a conventional call to spiritual awakening by way of a portentous external cue (Donne's church bell, Thoreau's sunrise) into a pellucid observation on the *sine qua non* of enlightenment in general. He does this, like Donne, by shifting the provenance of enlightenment from the passing, external cue to the individual's abiding and *self*-actualized receptivity to such an experience.

Thoreau's refashioning of this sentiment, however, also follows his own particular humor. Here, as elsewhere with several of his appropriations from other writers, he inverts a gloomy perspective into his own brand of optimism.[5] Thus, the individual who is spiritually prepared to hear fully Donne's bell in "Devotion #17" is awakened to a universally shared "affliction" (441). And even though Donne promises that "No man hath affliction enough that is not matured, and ripened by it, and made fit for God by that affliction" (441), his message is still, at best, a somber one. But from Thoreau's characteristically buoyant perspective, that individual spiritually prepared to recognize the full meaning of the dawn is awakened instead to a "beautiful and winged life" (II 367).

Notes

[1] Philip Van Doren Stern cites Harry Levin's proposed connection between the second sentence of the paragraph ("The light which...") and passages in Hemingway and Fitzgerald (447). Walter Harding notes a parallel between the metaphor in the last sentence ("The sun is but...") and a line in Emerson's essay "Politics" (319).

[2] All citations from Thoreau are from the 20 volume AMS Press 1982 edition of Thoreau's writings.

[3] Thoreau comments directly upon Donne in his journals, calling him "a man of strong sense, a sturdy English thinker, full of conceits and whimsicalities" (VII 467). Kenneth Walter Cameron provides the extracts from eight of Donne's poems that Thoreau copied into the earliest (covering 1836-41) of his three principal commonplace books (*Transcendental Apprentice* 156-7), and fourteen more Donne extracts that Thoreau copied into his second (covering 1840-48) commonplace book (*Thoreau's Literary Notebook* iv, 320-24).

[4] See Canby, 189-90.

[5] See Doloff, 2-3.

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Notes and Queries

Joe Moldenhauer came across a novel which draws on Thoreau's life and writings, the ironic *Woodsmen, or Thoreau and the Indians*, by Arnold Drupat (University of Oklahoma Press, 1994, with a new preface; originally published privately by Letter Press, 1979). In its new incarnation, the book is volume 11 of the American Indian Literature and Critical Studies series. A college professor in mid-life crisis attempts to establish a commune, living an authentic life close to nature in upstate Walden, New York, up the Hudson River. There are complications related to a land title contested by an Indian tribe (shades of Cooper's *Pioneers* as well?), a nearby power-plant to be built nearby, and members of the Mob. Joe describes this story as "a wry fable."

Environmental pioneer David Brower is profiled in the 7 June *2000 Christian Science Monitor* as "A Modern Thoreau with Sharp Elbows." Continuing to push for change faster than many colleagues (and opponents) would like, Brower recently resigned from the board of the Sierra Club, but continues to be active in several organizations, and hosts his own Web page at *www.wildnesswithin.com*. At the 1997 Annual Gathering, Brower was awarded the first Thoreau Society Medal, in recognition of his many years of heroic environmental leadership.

In a brochure to accompany an art exhibit, "Wild Beasts," by artists Roy de Forest and Gaylen Hansen, Gary Gildner has written "Although [the artists] were born on farms... this fundamental detail proves nothing about anything. But like Thoreau's trout in the milk, perhaps it provides strong circumstantial evidence that the country of sift and flow and swirl was bound to get their attentions sooner or later."

Elisabet Gunnarsdottir writes from Iceland with news that an author friend of hers, Guomundur P. Olafsson, will soon publish a book on the mountain areas in Iceland that will include a few quotations from Thoreau. Recently the publisher distributed several postcards, one of them bearing a quotation in Icelandic from "Walking," which retranslates back into English as "In wilderness lies the preservation of man." Oops. But the spirit of the thing is correct, and furthermore makes a point in perhaps a more pertinent and understandable way.

The *Utne Web Watch Daily www.utne.com/daily* reports that "Thoreau would turn in his grave if he saw the latest magazine title from Time Inc.": *RealSimple*. Apparently the magazine is an example of marketing double-speak, lacking the grit of real voluntary simplicity and celebrating the motto "Do less. Have more."

Christopher Camuto's critically acclaimed book, *Another Country: Journeying toward the Cherokee Mountains* (available in paperback from the University of Georgia Press, $16.95) describes, according to a review in the *Lebanon* [TN] *Democrat* and *Wilson County News*, 31 May 2000, page 18, "the tragic collision of natural and cultural history in the mountainous region that borders North Carolina and Tennessee. In the spirit of Henry David Thoreau in 'Walking,' Camuto explored fragments of quiet backcountry preserved in Great Smoky Mountains National park and the adjoining national forests—the Pisgah, Cherokee, Nantahala and Chattahoochee. These places, according to Camuto, coincide with the backbone of the old Cherokee territory and provide the best potential points of access to that other, older world." Camuto writes about the extermination of the red wolf from the area and the coincidental genocide of the Cherokee tribe, for whom the red wolf is the principal clan animal. "The reintroduction of wolves sharpened Camuto's awareness of how small and fragmented wolf country is now—the few wild places left, he writes, are 'strangled by interstates, bordered by polluted rivers and doused with acid rain and snow.'"As Camuto writes about "the ecology, the history and the mythology of the Cherokee Mountain region, [he] simultaneously explores the parallel problems of being a wolf on the cusp of the 21st century and being a writer drawn to the continually shrinking southern Appalachian country." Thanks to Robert Stone in Tennessee for bringing this book in the Thoreauvian tradition to our attention and for forwarding the newspaper review.

Austin Meredith writes: "It's always interesting to see how various people use Thoreau. Kurt Vonnegut's 1997 book *Timequake*, which I was reading on the plane the other day, turns out to have a couple of howlers embedded in it at pages 2 and 93: On page 2 he introduces Thoreau as one item on a list of persons whom he says 'find being alive embarrassing or much worse,' people for whom 'the end of the world can't come soon enough.' This list of persons he has constructed includes, besides our guy, the names of Mark Twain, Jesus, Kurt's father Kurt Vonnegut Senior, and the jazz pianist Fats Waller. His proof that Thoreau's name belongs on such a list is that 'Henry David Thoreau said most famously, "The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation."' On page 93 Vonnegut is making a list of books that 'despise matrimony.' He manages to come up with two such, Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*, and Thoreau's *Walden*. Evidently for this reason, he says of *Walden* that he 'Loved it.'"

A Master of Arts in Earth Literacy is offered by Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College in Indiana, through a distance learning format, and the ad for this program features part of Thoreau's sentence beginning "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately".

From Steve Ells:

The controversy surrounding the plans of the Middlesex School to develop in the Estabrook Woods (Thoreau's Easterbrooks country) is the subject of case studies in two recently-published books. In one, Professor Charles Rusch of the University of Oregon (a Middlesex graduate) worries that the School is not following an environmentally sensitive educational policy that will prepare its students for the next century and use the resources and traditions of the landscape. In the other, Professor Morris Fiorina of the Hoover Institution worries that the citizen-objectors represent "extreme voices," a dark side of civic engagement who threaten democracy. (Goodness gracious: all we've done is to use the written word.)

The latter book is showing up as readings in college political science courses across the country. Fiorina (then a Concord resident) appears to have had a preconceived notion and searched for a case study he could shape to suit his purpose.

I have added the full text of the Rusch chapter on environmental sustainability to the Estabrook Woods website *www.home.earthlink.net/~steveells/estabrook* (look under Middlesex project). I have also included on the website the educational vision expressed for the Estabrook Woods by the eminent evolutionary biologist Ernst Mayr, who spoke admiringly of Thoreau's work in these woods. I don't have the final e-text of the Fiorina chapter.

The Rusch citation is Rusch, Charles W. (1999) "Educating for Sustainability: Letters from an Alum". In *Built Environment Education in Art Education*, pp. 92-117. eds.: Joanne K. Guilfoil and Alan R. Sandler Reston, VA: The National Art Education Association

The Fiorina citation is to FIORINA, MORRIS K. (1999)"Extreme Voices: a dark side of civic engagement." In *Civic Engagement in American Democracy*, p.528 pp..eds.: Skocpol, Theda; Fiorina, Morris K.Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press.

N & Q, *from page 11*

Harold C. Wilson, Society member, is working on a book called *Thoreau Lives*. It is a memoir of Wilson's Thoreauvian experience in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia. Another of his books to be released this fall by Averasboro Press, Erwin NC called *The Cry of the Frigate Bird*, tells of Wilson's Thoreauvian experience in the British Virgin Islands. Chapter 13 is called "Thoreau's Message."

As mentioned in the Thoreau Society Membership Committees report, the Society has formed an Advocacy Committee to report to the Board in January on how the Society might best carry out the advocacy statement in our by-laws to help preserve Thoreau Country. We welcome comments and suggestions from all members of the Society. Please send them to Joel Myerson, who is chairing the committee, at milldam2@yahoo.com by 1 December. Other committee members are Susie Carlisle, Jayne Gordon, Ronald Wesley Hoaf, and John Mack.

Eyes on Hollywood: The 1995 hit comedy *Clueless*, loosely based on Jane Austen's *Emma*, sparked a notable Austen revival in movies and TV. This season, its spinoff TV sitcom takes place at a fictional Bronson Alcott High School. May we soon expect moguls to resurrect the author of *Conversations with Children*?

Additions to the Thoreau Bibliography

Susie Carlisle

Cain, William E., ed. *A Historical Guide to Henry David Thoreau*. New York: Oxford UP, 2000.

Marchand, Peter J. *Autumn: A Season of Change*. UP of New England, 2000. Synthesis of migration, pond and lake ecology, seed-dispersal, etc. balanced with excerpts from early naturalist writings, including Thoreau.

Marshall, Ian. *Story Line: Exploring the Literature of the Appalachian Trail*. Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 1998. Review: *Journal of American Studies* 34, no. 1, (April 2000), reviewed by Karen Wills. Book concludes with "a eulogistic chapter on Thoreau's essay 'Ktaadn'."

McGregor, Robert Kuhn. *A Wider View of the Universe: Henry Thoreau's Study of Nature*. Urbana: U of Illinois Press, 1997. Review: *American Literature* 72, no. 1 (June 2000), reviewed by David Mazel.

McNamee, Gregory, ed. *The Mountain World: A Literary Journey*. Sierra Club/Random House, 2000. A concentration on "contemplative inspirations evoked by mountains, with a reference to Thoreau's experience with Katahdin's "Vast, Titanic, Inhuman Nature."

Murray, John A., ed. *The Mountain Reader*. The Lyons Press, 2000. Collection of 22 essays by mountain enthusiasts spanning 200 years and three continents. Thoreau's work is included in the section designated thematically as "liberation."

Owens, Tom C. "Ives and his Times." *Institute of Studies of American Music* 29, no. 2 (Spring 2000). Review of Philip Lambert's *Ives Studies* (Cambridge UP, 1998) in which Thoreau is offered as a "constant figure in Ives's inner life."

Rossi, William and Heather Kirk Thomas, ed. *The Writings of Henry David Thoreau, Journal: Volume 6*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2000.

Schneider, Richard J., ed. *Thoreau's Sense of Place: Essays in American Environmental Writing*. American Land and Life Series. Iowa City: U of Iowa Press, 2000.

Sjolin, Thorsten. "The Thoreau Society." *The Private Library*. Fifth Series: vol. 2:1 (Spring 1999).

Smith, Harmon. *My Friend, My Friend: The Story of Thoreau's Relationship with Emerson*. Review: *Yankee Magazine* (September 2000), reviewed by Geoffrey Elan.

Smith, Larry. "Thoreau and Ryokan: Two Voices of Solitude." *Shambala Sun: Buddhism, Culture, Meditation, Life*. (September 2000). 50-57.

Thoreau, Henry David. "A Yankee in Canada." Review: *Christian Witness and Church Advocate* (Boston MA), 21 September 1866, vol. XXXIII no. 35, p. 138, col.5-6. Review appears under "Books Received...From the Publishers."

Worley, Sam McGuire. *Emerson, Thoreau, and the Role of the Cultural Critic*. Albany: SUNY Press, 2000.

We are grateful for the contributions made to the bibliography by A Berlin and R. Winslow III. Please continue to keep Susie Carlisle informed of any items missed and new items as they appear at, 44 Baker Farm, Lincoln MA 01773-3004; e-mail: scarlisl@ziplink.net; fax: 978-827-3162. Whenever possible, please include a copy of the book, article, or other item, so that it can be preserved in the Thoreau Society's collection at the Thoreau Institute.

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Established in 1941, The Thoreau Society, Inc., is an international nonprofit organization with a mission to honor Henry David Thoreau by stimulating interest in and fostering education about his life, works, and philosophy and his place in his world and ours, by coordinating research on his life and writings, by acting as a repository for Thoreauviana and material relevant to Henry David Thoreau, and by advocating for the preservation of Thoreau Country.

Membership in the Society includes subscriptions to its two publications, *The Concord Saunterer* (published each autumn) and the *Thoreau Society Bulletin* (published quarterly). Society members receive a 10% discount on all merchandise purchased from the Thoreau Society Shop at Walden Pond and advance notice about Society programs, including the annual gathering. Contact the Thoreau Society administrative offices in Lincoln, Massachusetts, for membership information (address below).

Thoreau Society Directory

Communications relating to *The Concord Saunterer* should be addressed to Richard Schneider, Department of English and Modern Languages, Wartburg College, 222 Ninth Street NW, Waverly, IA 50677;tel: (319) 352-8435; e-mail: schneider@wartburg.edu.

Inquiries about merchandise (including books and mail-order items) should be directed to Jon Fadiman, Manager, the Thoreau Society Shop at Walden Pond, 915 Walden Street, Concord, MA 01742-4511, U.S.A.; tel: (978) 287-5477; fax: (978) 287-5620; e-mail: Shop@walden.org.

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